A PLEA FOR

BIBLICAL STUDIES AND SOMETHING MORE:

An Opening Address

AT

MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE, LONDON,

DELIVERED OCT. 4TH, 1858.

BY

JAMES MARTINEAU.

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EDWARD T. WHITFIELD, 178, STRAND.

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ADDRESS.

SINCE we were last assembled in this Hall, an event has occurred which, though remote from the immediate action of this Institution, belongs to its domestic history, and by a sad memorial divides its present from its past. That venerable man whose name has been on the lips of its *alumni* since the first years of the present century, and to whom it owes almost all its theological honours, has laid his burthen down and been called to the Christian's rest.* It is a gentle sorrow with which a life of fourscore years and ten, a life full of graces as of time, is seen to fade away; and even by the nearest in affection the farewell, so mercifully delayed, may be said in tones trembling with tenderness rather than with grief. But still, these final partings, soften them as we may, have a significance for us that belongs to nothing else; and those of us who have been pupils of Mr. Wellbeloved would ill deserve the privilege, could we see his name erased from the list of the living without a pause of reverential thought. Permit me, then, before speaking the words required from me as a teacher in this College, to fall back for a moment into the position of a student, to recall the priceless memories of that eager and thirsting time, and once more turn a grateful look to the benignant form now sinking into the shadows of the past.

* Rev. Charles Wellbeloved, Theological Tutor and Head of the College during its York period from 1803 to 1840, died Aug. 29, in the 90th year of his age and the 67th of his ministry in York.

Well do I remember the respectful wonder with which we saw, as our course advanced, vein after vein of various learning modestly opened out: the pride with which we felt that we had a Lightfoot, a Jeremiah Jones, and an Eichhorn all in one, yet no mere theologian after all, but scarcely less a naturalist and an archæologist as well: the impatience with which, out of very homage to his wisdom, we almost resented his impartial love of truth in giving us the most careful epitome of other opinions with scarce the suggestion of his own. Many of us have found the notes taken in his lecture-room our best Cyclopædia of divinity during the first years of our active ministry, when books were forced aside by other claims; and when at last some leisure for independent study has been won, and the entrance of the theological sciences upon new phases has taken us into untried fields, then most of all, if I may generalize my own experience, have we been thankful for our training under a master of the true Lardner type, candid and catholic, simple and thorough, humanly fond indeed of the counsels of peace, but piously serving every bidding of sacred truth. Whatever might become of the particular conclusions which he favoured, he never justified a prejudice; he never misdirected our admiration; he never hurt an innocent feeling or overbore a serious judgment; and he set up within us a standard of Christian scholarship to which it must ever exalt us to aspire. The generation in whom his memory lives is no longer large: but if we are a "*faithful* few," we shall see to it, that his name shall go down among our sacred traditions.

It is an old lament that the men who are found most worthy of enduring veneration often pass without recognition, or in the midst of opposition, through their own times. This may be true of great Reformers born for conflict, or charged with some unique ideal, and granted to the chief crises of the world. But for periods of tranquil progress, a happier adjustment may be observed between the laws of the single and those of the social mind. Side by side with the slow and steady rate of change which alone can be given to humanity *en masse*, moves the individual thinker,

at first with the rapid spring of youthful courage, at last with the quiet steps, the frequent rests, the placid retrospect of age. The sympathies which perhaps he outstrips in the beginning have time to come up with him before the end, and as the seasons chill upon his heart, close round him with warmer appreciation. If for a while he parts from his comrades and has to toil on alone, it is when he is strong to bear it; and when the feet grow weary and the spirit faints, he finds the world all reconciled and dies in peace. The almost patriarchal years of our friend just gone gave him this compensation for so long a time, that it needs an effort to remember that it was not always so. To the younger generation, who have grown familiar with the admitted honours of his name, who have been taught to regard it as a tower of strength to a purely conservative theology, it will scarcely be credible that he had once the repute of unsound and dangerous innovation: but my seniors and companions do not forget the mysterious alarms that invested a certain heresy called "Cappism," not so much actively inculcated as supposed to be esoterically held by our revered and too retiring tutor. Nor did any previous public teacher venture, so far as I know, to withdraw from the system of Christian evidences the argument from Hebrew prediction, and set the Messianic prophecies in the full and exclusive light of contemporary history. Such startling steps of thought could be taken only by one who had courage to contemplate organic changes in theologic science, and whose conscious fidelity could support him in a position almost solitary among his contemporaries and not generally shared even by his students. The example, from a Christian so humble and a scholar so profound, may well console those who, following him at a vast distance, repeat the same experience in far slighter wanderings from the beaten track.

In fact, so long as there are different rates of mental change for different parts of the same community, there must be *some* in every generation on whom the repute of heterodoxy falls. The grand conservative power in the world is the tenacity of habitual ideas in the great mass of busy men, who have to live

upon the store with which they set out on their career. The grand provision for progressive thought is in the studies of men devoted to some special research, or able to follow its course under the conduct of its great masters. Between these two tendencies a certain conflict is inevitable in every age; and is in itself so little to be deprecated that it is the very condition of our escape from a fatal stagnation, and has no other evil in it than it artificially contracts from our infirmities and sins. The student who at all keeps up with the intellectual movement of his time, who is quickened with any living learning instead of being buried with the dead, is carried, by irresistible necessity, to new mental stations, and is compelled to revise his judgments, and recompute his place. But let him not deem it a strange thing that no longer is the dear old world all with him where he stands; that others stay where they are more at home, till he has made their transit to him clear and safe, and the region round him genial and fruitful. There is an element of *faithfulness* in their reluctance which he must recognize and respect. And the burthen which it imposes on him is wholesome to bear: for there is scarcely a better discipline for the lonely thinker than the unwelcome plunge from the silent order of his contemplative world into the ferment of the agora,—than the encounter with the tangle of human feeling and opinion, and the necessity of tracing a way into the light by the circuitous tact of patient sympathy instead of the curt methods of a supercilious logic. This difficulty (I confidently speak for my friend and colleague as for myself) awakens in us no complaint and no despair. As teachers of those who are to guide the next generation, we are indeed bound not to lag behind the standard of our own,—nay, to keep as near as we can to the front ranks of advancing research in our respective fields: did we *not* make this our aim, we should have studied to little purpose the examples of such predecessors as a Wellbeloved and a Kenrick,—should be faithless to the most honourable traditions and distinctive opportunities of our religious body,—and drop out of our natural relation to the Church of the Future. But as our march is still in the same service and

in simple allegiance to the same Divine Master,—as the heart of the Past beats strong within us both, and we break with no one guiding faith or reverence, we do not hesitate to claim the old companionship, to expect a generous trust, and to believe that, however scattered for awhile by diversities of track or speed, both the hasting and the lingering feet will be found in the evening, when all is over, resting on the same field.

The problem of this College has always been to reconcile the interests of free learning with the practical training for the Christian ministry. That these two ends should be incompatible, is a suspicion which its supporters have been too noble-minded to indulge. Sympathy with foremost scholarship, and administration of popular religion, they have steadfastly believed might go together and help each other. It is an honourable fact that this faith, combining conditions which in the eye of sceptic fear would appear mutually destructive, has been maintained, not by the will of some eccentric and enthusiastic Founder, imposing a personal fancy on the Institution, but under a form of government singularly open and popular. Where, in the whole range of ecclesiastical history, can we find a parallel case, —that a large body of men, with strong and definite convictions on divine things, have declined, by deliberate verdict, to take any security for the perpetuation of their own opinions, beyond the constant revision and testing of them by the best attainable instruments of knowledge?—and have further declared it an essential qualification for Christian Preaching that the minister, far from simply echoing the doctrines of an earlier time and becoming the mere organ of his people's state of mind, should be able to speak from a higher position, and prepare the world around him for the next hour that is to strike? A principle so wisely bold cannot fail now and then to be put to a severe trial: and it may be admitted that precisely the present stage of theological knowledge is especially critical for it. That it will be found equal to the utmost strain which will be put upon it, I do not for a moment doubt; provided we are prepared, with suitable pliancy, to accept the altered conditions of our time. Now that a gene-

ration has visibly passed away, it may not be unseasonable to note and register the most essential changes in the aspect of our educational problem, and compute their bearing on the right classification and apportionment of studies.

The impulse given by the Reformation to clerical erudition is mainly due, I need hardly say, to the new position into which the Scriptures were then raised. At the earliest stage of the revolt from Rome, resistance was confined to the comparatively recent Dominican abuses, without disturbance to the authority of the Church, expressed in its older councils and the writings of the Fathers. It was so embarrassing a task, however, to defend the validity of an arbitrary chronological limit, that the line was inevitably pushed further and further back, till nothing was left behind it but the Sacred Writings and the Apostolic Age: and *there* at last Protestantism took its stand: there alone was the Word of God, to the test of which every question of belief and duty must be brought. The Scriptures thus succeeded to the place previously held by the Creeds and dogmatic Decrees of the Christian hierarchy; and were required to discharge the same function, and be ready with an answer to whatever doubts were brought to them. It was impossible to consult them with such an object, without instantly feeling how different they are from the short, sharp, systematic definitions in which the Church had pronounced her judgment and handed it down ready-made; how much harder it is to win a response from them; over how wide a field of history and law, of poetry and prophecy, of proverb and epistle, the divine truth is distributed,—and that, too, not with the mechanical order and precision of the Letter, but with the trackless freedom of the Spirit. A cold and critical age would have been thrown into despair by the difficulty of using such a collection as the Bible in substitute for the compendia and canons of the Church; but at a time when the Book of books had freshly opened the deepest fountains of men's hearts, it was invoked for every purpose, and the difficulties it brought were as nothing before the energy which it kindled. More than once it was some happy moment of contact with the unspoiled

phrase of Holy Writ, that had dissipated the darkest clouds of Luther's own mind: and he himself describes the sudden light of joy that flashed upon him, when in place of the "*pœnitentia*" of the Roman Church (reduced to an outward "*penance*" of expiation) the Greek μετάνοια carried its pure meaning to his heart, of an inward and spiritual change. The whole religion, which had become worn down to an arid dust by the grinding of the Latin routine, broke into freshness again and sprinkled its very soul upon the Reformers, when opening upon them through its native speech. An insatiable thirst carried them to the well-spring of the untranslated word, and gave a charm to the severest grammatical labours that promised to bring them a step nearer to their place of rest. The incredible difficulties through which Reuchlin struggled into a mastery of the Hebrew, and sent forth Melancthon to propagate the "new learning," by his personal instructions at Wittenberg and by the publication of Greek and Hebrew manuals, the rapidity with which an immense apparatus of Biblical studies was created, the marvellous approach to exactitude which the new philology attained, may well fill us with admiration, and reproach our more effeminate and less modest scholarship. The zeal for learning derived all its inspiration from a religious source,—the desire and need of conversing with the original oracles of God. The Reformers, having refused to bind themselves by the recognized decisions of the Church, had to begin again the organization of dogma and ritual; and for that end to make themselves and their clergy masters of the sacred materials out of which the structure must be raised. The education for the Christian ministry was thus suddenly expanded, from the narrow drill of a few half ecclesiastical, half Aristotelian manuals, to the dimensions of the whole Bible in its own languages. True it is, that when once the new symbolical books were produced and invested with authority, a partial return to the old intellectual apathy ensued: the work was considered to be done; the essence of Holy Writ to have been extracted; and the future was closed against the excitement of discovery. In the Lutheran Church, where the authority of the

new Confessions was most stringently imposed, this paralysing reaction was powerfully felt. In those of the Genevan type, however rigid the inward organism of their vast logical system, there was less outward restraint upon a free development, and a wider exposure to varieties of national temperament: and accordingly they remained far truer to their original Scripturalism, and continued to produce a Biblical literature, and to maintain among the people the habit of reading the Bible, when the Saxon churches had in these respects become degenerate. Where the function of secondary Creeds was at the lowest, the continued need of the primitive Scripture was at the highest. Hence, what is true of the Calvinists in general as compared with the Lutherans, holds of the English Presbyterians in particular as compared with other branches of the Swiss stock. The trials of conscience through which they passed in the latter half of the seventeenth century having brought them to peculiar sensitiveness on the subject of subscription, they fell back with all the more absolute repose on Scripture. They were not content with its use by a Church as a source of doctrines to be thence imposed, in second-hand epitomes, on the members one by one; but required that it should be left to stand alone, in separate and first-hand contact with each individual believer's mind, and be permitted to speak for itself. This was the freedom, not (if I may say so) a freedom *from* Scripture, but a freedom *to* Scripture, on which our forerunners so strenuously insisted. In its original idea it undoubtedly involved the most absolute and infallible authority for every part of the letter of the Bible; a belief which in 1648 had even embodied itself in a penal law, visiting with the punishment of death any one who should call in question the authenticity of any book of either the Old or the New Testament. This belief it was which became stereotyped in the phrases, "*the Sufficiency of Scripture*," and "*the Scriptures the rule of faith and practice*:" the former expressing only its negative side, excluding all that lay beyond the Scriptures: the latter expressing the positive side, admitting all that lay within them. Taken together, they turn the key upon you

with the sharpest precision, and shut you up in the most rigorous logical incarceration. If you believe any moral or spiritual truth on extra-biblical grounds, you cannot use the first: if you hesitate about any proposition whatsoever in the Bible, you cannot use the second. The effect of the two is to present the Scriptures, the whole Scriptures, and nothing but the Scriptures, as the depositories of divine truth; and to concentrate the qualifications of the Christian ministry upon one point,—*the exposition of these oracles of Heaven.* Enable him to find their meaning and to express it clearly to others, and his work as an ambassador of God is done.

Such was the theory which occasioned the demand for a learned ministry, and gave their constitution and usages to the Nonconformist academies. The organization of studies which would shape itself around this determining idea it is not difficult to trace.

(1.) The first thing must be to effect the necessary insulation of the Scriptures, and detach them, by marks of exclusive divineness, from the mass of human literature: and this accordingly was the aim of all investigations into the Jewish and Christian Canon, with the external history of the several books.

(2.) Next, the line being drawn which excludes all human writings and encloses all divine, precaution must be taken against any interior adulteration of the latter, impairing their absolute identity: the purity of their Text must be tried by every available criterion, and emendation, sytematised into an art, be applied to every remediable blemish; and hence the vast *Appatus Criticus* which has been accumulated, and the mere description of which forms so considerable a part of the work of a Theological Professor.

(3.) Lastly, the books being at length as perfect as may be in our hands, it is time to read and understand them: resorting, for that purpose, not only to all available philological aids, but to the illustrative help of History and Antiquities, the reciprocal lights of comparable passages, and the whole scheme of Exegetical resource. In accomplishing this final part of the work,

the teacher's method is altogether at the mercy of the hypothesis respecting Scripture which he carries into it. Does he assume the whole to be alike the word of God? then he levels all its varieties as unessential, and, treating it as throughout the expression of *One* unerring Mind, takes it as homogeneous and absolutely self-consistent in every part; and, for elucidation of obscurities in fact or doctrine, overleaps the lines of time and authorship, and applies the same standard to the whole. Hence the Interpreter passes into the HARMONIST: who undertakes to weave apparently discrepant narratives into one continuous history, and to construct apparently successive beliefs into one system of absolute truth.

This then is the series of studies on which it has become traditional in our Academies to throw the stress of the Theologic work: Establishment of the Canon,—critical History and Emendation of the Text,—Interpretation of the Language,—Harmonizing of the Matter. A proficient in these, it was thought, had mastered his stewardship of the word; and as there was "sufficiency" in the "Scriptures," so was there in the Education which gave him possession of them. Whatever you might superadd to these was to be regarded as subsidiary; expedient perhaps for secular ornament and scholarly repute, but not indispensable to the furniture of the Christian divine. In concession, however, to these less imperative claims, the main acts of theological education were introduced by a philosophical Prologue, and followed by an historical Epilogue. *Before* entering the proper sphere of his Biblical pursuits, the student was invited to survey the truths of Natural Religion and the doctrines of the Heathen World. And *after* emerging from his sacred studies, he was conducted through the chief periods of Ecclesiastical History and controversy. Both these, however, were kept in a kind of subordination to the intermediate work which affected not only their extent, but their spirit: they were mere human wings of a Divine centre, and were oppressed and quenched by the light that towered above them; and were chiefly looked at, accordingly, as foils to set off the ideal glory they embraced.

The religions of Nature and the Heathen world were reviewed chiefly with intent to prove the "need of a Revelation;" and the History of the Church was read with the preconception of a model purity and unity in the apostolic age, from which it was one protracted decline into corruption. Where the præ-christian ages of the world are cited to prove how little man can find the truth, and the post-christian how little he can keep it, they are inevitably examined chiefly on their negative side, and it is vain to expect any genial historical appreciation. The whole tendency of this intellectual point of view is to draw into one absolute focus all the divineness of our human world; to concentrate attention upon it as the only glory; and to glance at the life on either side only to expose the depth of its darkness or the worthlessness of its light. We cannot wonder at the narrow and slighting estimate, long inherited from Puritanism, of all except Biblical studies; for to speak of the "*sufficiency* of Scripture," what is it but to pronounce all else *superfluous?*

Many concessions in detail have long been made to more comprehensive ideas, not only in our own Institution, but in others where they might be less expected. But they have entered incidentally under the plea and on the side of secular knowledge, without affecting the main program as originally conceived; which still probably holds its ground, on the tenure of unrevised habit, in many minds no longer possessed by its fundamental principle. A desire yet lingers to keep both philosophy and history at a distance and in a merely ancillary position,—to prevent their mixing themselves with proper theology,—to preserve the separate integrity of Biblical studies as having an organism of their own, and to make the interpretation of the sacred records the final act of the student's career. If the meaning of those writings, once ascertained, is really held to be decisive and without appeal on every matter of which they speak, nothing can be more natural than this desire. I recently heard it most consistently expressed from the pulpit of a neighbouring cathedral by one of the most eminent of our living divines, who laid

down the following positions:* that our Lord, by reading out of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth, demonstrated for us the infallible inspiration of the whole Old Testament: that the commission and powers he gave to his apostles assure us, directly or indirectly, of the infallibility of all the New: that we are bound to trust this testimony of his and all that it carries with it, let appearances be what they may: that if the naturalist, the astronomer, the geologist, the investigator of primæval history, are staggered by the picture of nature and the spread of nations in the book of Genesis, or by the reported miracles of Joshua and Jonah, they have nothing to do but unreservedly submit their human knowledge to the higher certainty of the Divine Word: that if our moral sense revolts from any sentiment or act sanctioned by a sacred writer, we must conform our conscience to his: that demoniacal possession is a divinely authenticated fact which no pretended law of nature is to be permitted to dispute: that we are to dismiss as optical illusions of our own minds every apparent discrepancy of reported fact or error of expectation: that Philosophy and Criticism have no office within Holy Writ except to remove its difficulties and establish its harmony, assuming all its propositions to be unconditionally true. In this view, certainly there can be nothing ulterior to the question, "What saith the Word?"

From this position, however, we have been gradually but irresistibly borne away. Within the last generation, Natural Science, Comparative Philology, Historical Criticism, have compelled a revision of many judgments previously unchallenged by the boldest divines. When the first part of Mr. Wellbeloved's Translation of the Bible was published, it was as yet too early to disturb the traditions of the origin of mankind from a single pair, of the universal Deluge, of the dispersion of races, and original unity of language. Geologists were adducing fossil evidence of the flood: and in our College class-rooms, where the teaching was never behind the highest standard of the day, proofs were

* The cathedral was Westminster Abbey; the divine, Rev. Dr. Wordsworth.

still adduced of the soundness of the Mosaic chronology of the human race. Need I do more than name Mr. Kenrick's admirable "Essay on Primæval History," in order to furnish a landmark for the tides of opinion, and measure the amount of change? Nor is it more possible, within the limits of the Christian records, longer to take our stand on the absolutism of the letter. A recent pamphlet by a member of the Church of England,*—a pamphlet written in a spirit not less reverential than intelligent,—enumerates some of the chief results of modern criticism, in order to rouse attention to the new exigencies of theology, and saves me the necessity of any statement of my own. He reminds us that we must recognize an ascending progress of the Hebrew religion, traceable throughout its records, taking a new and sublimer start from the Advent of Christ, visibly proceeding still through the Apostolic age, and probably not to be arrested to the end of time: that the Evangelical narratives cannot be received as infallible records of fact or of discourse, in the face of the lesser discrepancies among the Synoptical Gospels and the greater between them and the remaining Gospel: that the "Apostolic Epistles are not free from errors" of expectation, of interpretation, and of reasoning: and, above all, that among the New-Testament writers are found not simply different personal characteristics in their expression of the same faith, but types of doctrine materially different respecting the person and work of Christ, and the scope and conditions of his religion. These things, stated by a lay member of one of the most stationary of Christian churches, may perhaps receive the attention they require, as by no means the speculations of a few extreme theologians, but the well-established results of the most sober and conservative criticism that retains any pretension to *be* criticism at all. As if to prepare for this new era, we have long accustomed ourselves to an alteration in our traditional phraseology; speaking of Scripture not as "*the rule* of faith and prac-

* Free Theological Inquiry the Duty of the Laity. By a Lay Member of the Church of England. Williams and Norgate. London. 1858.

tice," but as "*containing* a record of divine Revelation,"—not necessarily therefore to the exclusion of other things.

Consider then what is involved in this change. If divine and human elements lie mixed in Scripture, mere textual interpretation cannot ensure to us the pure object of our quest, and be the final act of our work: there is yet an ulterior discrimination to be effected before the Sacred Truth stands clear. It is not enough to reach the meaning of the words: the critique, if it is to yield any guiding result, must advance into the thought itself, and draw forth the imperishable essence from the transitory accidents. The end towards which all Christian theology presses forward is still the same, the Person of Jesus Christ, as the organ of Divine manifestation in our Humanity: but which is the true view of his Person?—that of Matthew? that of Paul? or that of John? Are we to find the essence of his religion in the humanities of the parables and the ethical depth of the Sermon on the Mount, or in the mystic spirituality of the discourses in the fourth Gospel? These, with a host of similar questions, remain over for reply, after the Interpreter has removed the last obscurity and given us all that the writers meant. We need him as much as ever: we can dispense with no part of the system of Biblical studies which closed with him: but when he has played his part, the curtain must not yet drop; for he leaves us in the very crisis of suspense, with the knot of the whole matter still unresolved. The Scriptures which he has unfolded to us *contain* indeed what is authoritatively above us, and is given for the homage of natures better than our best; but also what we have left behind us, and cannot without deterioration mistake for the permanently holy and divine. They open in the future a heavenly promise everlastingly true to the human mind and heart; but they mingle with it anticipations which have already missed their realization. To exhibit this mixture and then *leave* the matter there,—still more to oscillate evasively between the old high ground of scriptural finality and the liberal concessions which utterly undermine it, is to make express provision for doubt and uncertainty, by stopping short of the clearness of

knowledge and the firmness of faith. Something more is needed, if we are not to trifle with the problem of problems, and make no attempt to relieve the divine and indestructible truth from its human and perishable associations. A critique must be found for the Matter of Scripture, in addition to the interpretation of its Words.

Is this then a thing impossible or presumptuous? It has not proved so in the case of the Mosaic Cosmogony, which has yielded to the advance of the Natural Sciences, leaving with us its sublime Theism unharmed: or in the case of the Israelite atrocities, which our Moral Sense has learned to charge on the passions of an unreclaimed humanity instead of the inspiration of approving Heaven: or in the case of the doctrine of the Logos, to which, though it tinctures the whole meaning of our deepest gospel and penetrates the very words of Christ, we are able to assign a human growth by clear and intelligible steps. In these palpable and admitted examples, what are the instruments of our critique, which we apply as criteria to the very substance of the sacred writings? They are—the Sciences of Nature, the verdicts of Conscience, the indications of History: and if we press our question further, and ask, not about the *origin*, but about the *inherent truth* of the doctrine of the Logos, we have to seek all the grounds of the discussion in the speculative Metaphysics of religion. In other words, each kind of matter laid before us in Scripture comes into the court of the faculty proper for its appreciation, and affects us differently according as it is in harmony or discord with the essential conditions of intellectual, moral, and spiritual response. But these essential conditions are defined in two ways: by *historical* investigation, so far as they are inductively gathered from the phenomena and analogies of human experience: by *philosophical* research, so far as their traces lie in the inner constitution and limits of human nature. It is determined, therefore, by the very nature of things, which no arbitrary choice can alter, that historical and philosophical knowledge has a regulative function with respect to the theology of the letter; and that the conception of an *unconditional* Biblical

theology cannot be realized. And no organization of studies can be so truly conservative as one which, attempting no strain upon facts as they arise, shapes itself in sympathy with the real and natural springs of faith and self-devotion.

If with the Divine element of Scripture we are brought, in the present day, more freely to recognize the human; on the other hand, from the human world beyond the range of Scripture we are less eager to exclude the Divine. The fatal assumption that Heathendom and the first Christendom were opposed to one another as unguided Reason and unmixed Revelation, as bare Nature and exclusive Grace,—precluded formerly more than a timid and reluctant sympathy with the true and noble elements of Pagan life. I well remember (perhaps it is only a personal confession which I make) the half-guilty feeling with which, in young and fervent days, I found myself surprised into passionate admiration by the story of Socrates, and taken captive by words that seemed to me of unspeakable religious depth in Plato, or even in Cicero and Seneca. I accused myself of an unchristian perversity,—a want of evangelical simplicity and humbleness,—because often Greek and Roman history stirred the tides within me more than the image of Galilean apostles,—because the struggle for Hellenic freedom appeared more sacred than the conquest of idolatrous Canaan, and Leonidas nobler than Gideon,—because, read what I might in favour of a general resurrection in the body, the Phædon tempted me to hope rather for the immortality of the soul. Every beauty and good that fastened wonder or reverence on a world reputed alien from God, was felt to detract from the glories of his chosen sphere, and to weaken that contrast between a profane and a sacred realm on which everything was staked. The time is surely come when these artificial anxieties may disappear. It would be a strange gospel,—we now acknowledge,—that should find its interest and support in disparaging any gleams of truth and goodness in the life of men; and a poor sign of the Holiest Spirit, that it should have no sympathy for what is kindred to itself and springs from the very depths within us where it loves to dwell. The differ-

ence between the Christian and the Heathen we can no longer imagine to be, that the one *has*, and the other has not, the Divine guide; but rather that the one *knows* Him, while the other does not,—a difference which does not hinder the *unconscious* grace from being often intenser and higher than the *conscious*. And so, the bondage is taken from our hearts: with the more thoughtful of the early Fathers of the church, we can give a joyful recognition to God's ever-living Spirit in our humanity wherever it ripens any fruit; even should it look as fair in Attica or Latium as in Antioch or Alexandria. His preparing Presence with *both* the great races of the ancient spiritual world,—the Hellenic and the Hebrew,—with philosophers as with prophets,—is so far from diminishing that it rather doubles the magnitude of Christ's function: making him truly "the desire of *all* nations:" the supernatural focus towards which the separated paths of rays converged and in which they blended: his Personality embodying the whole essence of their truth and good: his self-sacrificing Death dropping whatever was instrumental and temporary: and his Risen Life lifting a perfected humanity into an object of eternal aspiration.

The general result of the whole survey is this: that while, on the one hand, Historical Criticism has to take the place of mechanical Harmonizing, and along with Moral and Philosophical principles of appreciation to enter the interior of Scripture; on the other, a consecration passes out upon knowledge once "profane," and draws all history into the drama of Divine Revelation. There is no tendency whatever in the present stage of theology to abate anything of the old thoroughness of Biblical studies; but there is an imperative need to take them up as part of a wider system and bring them into more genial relations with the whole circle of mental culture, and specially with the other modes by which human thought seeks an apprehension of the Divine.

What now is to be the fruit of all our pains and toil? Be they ever so successful, we look for only a very simple, yet surely not a trivial result. When all is done, we hope to sur-

render back the student's mind to the pure and childlike trusts, the self-forgetting love, the joyful zeal, which, in proportion as his call is real, dedicated him to this service at first. But then, it is one thing to have these elementary pieties as native impulses, untouched by thought, untempted by sophistic contradiction, and with no tenure but momentary occupation. It is quite another, to hold them by firm anchorage on their conscious grounds; to know all their bearings; to have put the strain on all that is least strong in them, and believe them still; to be ready, not only for their unhesitating utterance, but for their deliberate and comprehensive defence; and to place at the disposal of their power, not a raw undisciplined nature, but a mind rich in the long heritage of human thought, and deep in experience of its own. I do not deny the greatness of even blind affection turned on truly heavenly things, or the contagion of its mighty fervour; but though it may be better to have blind leaders of the blind than that all should go astray, yet it is the glory of Christian guidance that it demands open-eyed vision, and seeks God in the day-light of reality, not within the closed lids of ignorance or of ecstasy. I am aware it is sometimes said, that too much learning dries up the inner springs of spiritual life, or drains them off into some mere intellectual receptacle: and it is an old way of explaining the want of glow in an educated preacher, to suppose that his books have damped out his native fire. If any one will shew me a single instance in which an original enthusiasm has been quenched by culture, and one who might have been the prophet has turned into the pedant, I will listen to the plea. The fervours of an early piety I have seen die down for want of the ventilating winds of labour and of prayer; or lie as spent ashes on the hearth of a nature grown selfish; or thickened into the smoke of party-passion and fanatic fear: but never dimmed, like mere watch-fires of the night, by any rising dawn or spreading horizon of the mind. Preaching, where it is not a routine or a pretence (perhaps likewise where it *is*), is eminently an expression of the *whole* man: Religion spares no part of him, any more than God omits him-

self from here or there in the universe of life: the larger therefore his faculties and the wider his range of insight and sympathy, the more numerous are the keys on which the Divine touch may strike, and the fuller the chords through which the Word will peal. And if, under the practical difficulties of our problem, *we* cannot expect, any more than other bodies of Christians, to escape our proportion of temperaments too quiet for their work, still, even at the worst we can suppose, who can deny that, among dry men also, the educated is more tolerable than the dunce? He will at least teach you something, though he may not stir you; and by preserving the alliance of the religion of Christ with cultivated sense and pure taste and moral worth, save it from every taint of degradation.

Whilst it is our united and earnest desire to send forth effective preachers, as well as faithful representatives, of Christ's holy gospel, and while we shrink from none of the fair responsibilities of our trust, we would deprecate a weak dependence on the resources of *any* mere teaching or discipline in this respect. The limit is soon reached beyond which training for the pulpit cannot go. The function of such training is simply critical, not dynamic: it can restrain, correct, and purify; it cannot empower and inspire. It may free the inner feeling from some of the stiffness of its outward instrument, and help it to a more pliant medium of expression; but that inward spring itself, on which all but the whole depends, is beyond *our* world, and remains with the grace of God and the fidelity of the private conscience. The discipline of life, which makes the student *forget* himself, will do more than all our instructions that oblige him to *study* himself. When the growth of faith and affection within is strong enough to burst and fling away the husk of selfish fear, it is surprising how the powers of expression expand, and hang out unexpected leaves and blossoms to the light. Only the warmth of a living experience is adequate to this: contact with sorrowful realities; occasions of genial sympathy and strenuous duty; a transition from the communion of silent ideas to the many-toned voices of humanity. So far as this discipline is

opened by labours in the Mission-house and the School, our students have ever shewn themselves spontaneously eager to embrace it. So long as they continue to do their part in keeping the just balance between the critical exercises of the lecture-room and the practical activities of religious faith and love, we shall not despair of realizing the hopes of our churches; and for ourselves, of leaving behind the monument most worthy of a Christian ambition,—a generation of successors greater in every spiritual dimension than ourselves.

C. Green, Printer, Hackney.